

## **Civil Society Strategy: Building a Future that Works for Everyone**

### **Briefing note**

In its new [Civil Society Strategy](#), published August 2018, the Government sets out how it will work with and for civil society in the long-term to create a country that works for everyone.

*“For the purpose of this Strategy, civil society refers to individuals and organisations when they act with the primary purpose of creating social value, independent of state control. By social value we mean enriched lives and a fairer society for all.”*

The Strategy is built around the themes of:

- **People** (enabling a lifetime of contribution),
- **Places** (empowerment and investment for local communities),
- **The Social Sector** (supporting charities and social enterprises),
- **The Private Sector** (promoting business, finance and tech for good), and
- **The Public Sector** (ensuring collaborative commissioning).

The Strategy presents a number of opportunities for heritage science, including:

- **Youth engagement opportunities:**

The Strategy makes an explicit commitment to youth engagement:

*“The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport will work with the Department for Education to develop proposals to help young people to play their part [in shaping the future of our society]. The government will explore options for building on the cross-sector partnership created by the #iwill campaign, to identify how the existing offer for young people can be improved.*

*The government will also establish the National Citizen Service Trust as an independent public body that is accountable to parliament and ministers.*

*In addition, the government will allocate £90 million to an ambitious youth initiative, delivered by a new organisation which will operate independently of government. This organisation will have at its heart ensuring that major employers and social sector organisations work together to help the most disadvantaged young people transition into work.”*

This presents an opportunity for the heritage sector to become more actively engaged in the [#iwill](#) campaign, the [National Citizen Service](#) and other youth engagement initiatives.

- **Involvement in the ‘Places and local communities’ branch of the Strategy** – upcoming programme looking at more sustainable community spaces:

*“The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, in conjunction with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, will design a programme to look at more sustainable community spaces.”*

The government also announced its intention to "improve guidance to help communities take ownership of local assets, such as community buildings." This may help encourage the re-use of historic buildings, in which case the heritage science community could have a role to play in improving the available guidance.

- **New communication channels:**

The Strategy announced that,

*“The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport will establish a regular forum for social enterprises to coordinate relations with the government.”*

This may provide new channels for communication with policy-makers.

- **New opportunities for affirming the social value of cultural heritage:**

*“The government will explore what more can be done to harness the power of technology in addressing complex social issues, such as tackling loneliness, healthy ageing, online safety, and digital inclusion.”*

Heritage science research can be directly involved in this process, through contributions related to [health and wellbeing](#) and social prescription in heritage.

- **Potential funding for projects able to demonstrate social value:**

*“The government’s vision for public services in the modern era is one of collaborative commissioning. This means that in the future local players will be involved in an equal and meaningful way in how services are created and delivered. It means that all the resources of a community, including public funding, will be deployed to tackle the community’s challenges.”*

*“We are determined to ensure that public spending is used to generate social value in addition to the goods and services it purchases. There needs to be an increase in social value commissioning across all levels of government. ... The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport will lead the way by applying this wider remit of the Social Value Act to major projects.”*

The Strategy features Suffolk Libraries as a case study highlighting its role as a public space "supporting the transformation of individuals, communities, and society as a whole," and announces funding for a programme of digital activities. Organisations hosting heritage science activities may be eligible for similar support, provided that they renew their focus on demonstrating their social impact.